

## **Never Been Sketched by Luddleston**

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**Summary:**

When Stede finds out Ed has never sat for a portrait, he requests that Lucius see to the matter.

The only problem? Lucius has spent the past several weeks claiming he can only draw nude figures, so he doesn't have to sketch Stede at every given opportunity. It's a lie, but a useful one, especially when so many handsome pirates are now willing to pose naked for him.

Including, apparently, *Blackbeard*.

Or: Ed poses for a portrait in the nude, and Lucius has to watch Stede go through a life-altering internal crisis, witness a frankly upsetting level of sexual tension, and deal with the most fidgety portrait subject ever. At least he gets to ogle Blackbeard while he's at it. For the sake of art. Obviously.

## Never Been Sketched

### Author's Note:

I wholeheartedly recommend writing Lucius, 20/10, love this lad.

This takes place somewhere in the time between ep 5 and 6!

Lucius had been summoned to the captains' cabin, which was either a bad thing or a *really* bad thing. Last this had happened, he'd been faced with Blackbeard asking him whether Stede liked him. "*No, really, give me your honest opinion,*" he'd said, but he'd done it while absently flipping a knife around, which really didn't inspire anything but a positive response.

Granted, Captain *did* like him. But if he hadn't, Lucius wouldn't've said.

Today, when Lucius arrived, Stede clapped his hands together and said, "ah! Lucius! There you are!" If Lucius was being asked to record this encounter, he'd have to employ three exclamation points. As such, he was banking on 'a *really* bad thing', especially since Blackbeard was also there, sitting on Stede's couch and glowering. God. The man may have been more cordial than the legends suggested, but he really could glower.

"Here I am," Lucius said. He prayed he wasn't being called in to settle another stupid argument between the two of them, following such hits as, 'do horses have rich inner lives?' (maybe?) or 'is this insane pastry recipe worth it?' (definitely not.) or 'doesn't Ed look nice with his hair up?' (yeah, but he doesn't look pleased about it.)

"Lucius, would you *believe* that Ed has never had a portrait done?" Stede asked, and Lucius had to try hard not to roll his eyes, because *of course he hadn't*.

"Do you mean... aside from wanted posters, and illustrations, and such?"

Stede waved a hand, his sleeve fluttering. "Yes, yes, those exist, but we were discussing their inaccuracies—"

"They gave me *nine guns*," Blackbeard noted. Lucius wasn't sure why this was a bad thing.

"And we discovered," Stede continued, "that Ed has never had the occasion to sit for a portrait."

"Of course I haven't," Blackbeard said. "Sit still for hours on end? Sounds like torture. I've *been* tortured and it wasn't that bad."

He *was* rather fidgety.

"You needn't be completely still," Stede argued. "And you can talk. We'll have our regular chat, but while Lucius sketches you!"

Of course that was it. Lucius really regretted letting the captain find out he could draw. At least there was that one little caveat he'd mentioned. And by 'mentioned,' he meant 'lied about'.

Lucius sucked on his teeth, shaking his head a little. "Yeah, well, Captain, you must recall that one area in which I'm not particularly skilled."

"What's he talking about?" Blackbeard asked, once again talking like Stede was the only person in the room.

Lucius answered on Stede's behalf, because Stede was not the only person in the room. "I'm just, like, *really* bad at drawing clothes. So I only sketch nude models."

He'd first employed that excuse to convince Stede he couldn't possibly sketch him standing beside that terribly kitschy sign at the Republic of Pirates. Then, he learned it meant most of the crew would be willing and eager to pose nude for him, and, well, Lucius couldn't complain about that. Sometimes, they were even fine with him sketching *just* the important bits, which meant he didn't need to bother with anything like faces. He figured Stede would not be pleased if he just decided to sketch Blackbeard's dick. Jury was out on how Blackbeard would feel about that.

"A pity. Ordinarily, one is dressed in his finest for a portrait," Stede sighed. "It seems my wardrobe would be wasted here."

"Yes, well, it's too bad, isn't it? You'll have to contract an actual portrait artist rather than utilizing my skills," Lucius said. '*Which, by the way, I was not hired for,*' he did not add.

"No, hold on." Blackbeard's words stopped Lucius in his tracks, as they tended to do to most people.

"Sir?"

Then, wildly, Blackbeard said, "I've got nothing against that."

Holy shit. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph and all those other people. Lucius was about to see Blackbeard in nothing but the beard.

"On one condition," Blackbeard said, holding up a finger. "I get to keep the cravat on. It makes me feel fancy."

Lucius put a hand over his mouth, as if considering. In actuality, he was trying to hide a grin. He'd probably get a knife thrown at him if he told Blackbeard he was cute, but, you know. The *cravat* makes him feel *fancy*. "I think I can work with that," he said, once he'd swallowed all his giggles.

He spared a glance at Stede, who was getting steadily redder in the face. Of course, the man couldn't have a problem with nudity in general—when they hired Buttons on, he'd agreed to come aboard the ship only if Stede wasn't bothered by a spot of moonbathing. But Lucius, having been in Stede's position once or twice, back in his wayward youth, knew the signs of a man who was very attracted to another man and was about to see that other man in the buff.

Honestly? Stede had good taste. Blackbeard was a little bit too wild for Lucius, but if there was anybody who could match him pound for insane pound, it was Stede.

Stede, who was currently trying to creep away. "I'll, er. Not interrupt your artistic genius, then," he said.

"The fuck you won't," said Blackbeard. "Get back here, Stede. You told me we'd talk, so I didn't get bored out of my skull."

"Well. Yes. I suppose—I suppose we did."

While Stede quibbled, Lucius helped himself to the art supplies Stede had thoughtfully laid out on his desk, graphite and charcoal and thick sheets of cream-colored paper. "So, you should sit comfortably, since you will be in relatively the same position for a time."

"Comfortable. Yeah," Blackbeard said, approaching this task with all seriousness, following Lucius' eyes as Lucius looked around the room, pretending to consider various spots.

"You know what? I think the bed actually has the best lighting in the place," Lucius said, as if he hadn't sketched Fang on that very bed. What Stede didn't know wouldn't kill him.

Stede went a whole new shade of red as Lucius proposed the idea of Blackbeard getting naked in his bed. Blackbeard, on the other hand, didn't seem bothered, simply agreeing with Lucius' note on lighting. "Yeah. With the windows—I see."

His leather jacket hit the floor with a heavy thump. Lucius noted that the tattoos did go down both arms.

Lucius nudged a chair over with the toe of his boot, the slow scraping of the legs over the floor probably the only thing covering Stede's heavy breathing. You'd think the man wouldn't have been able to reach however old he was (forty? forty-five?) without having accepted the fact that sometimes men are hot, and sometimes, hot men are naked.

You'd think, and yet Stede was looking at Blackbeard kicking off his boots and then stripping out of his trousers like he was having a religious experience or a life-altering crisis. It was hard to tell which, but he was

goggle-eyed, drop-jawed, and his hair was starting to fluff up because he'd been running his hands through it.

God, Lucius couldn't wait to tell Pete about this later.

"So, how am I supposed to be sitting?" asked Blackbeard in all his nude glory, the sunlight casting a gorgeous glow on him from behind. He was half-perched on the edge of the bed, one heel up on the mattress, and he already looked a lot like a painting, except that most of the old masters were into painting youthful beauties with clean-shaven faces and golden curls and not near as many scars.

Hm. Maybe if Lucius ever wanted to paint something akin to a Renaissance master (not fucking likely, that would take so much effort) he ought to ask Stede to model.

Doubtful Captain would ever so much as remove his shirt, though.

"Boy. Am I doing it right?"

"Hm? Oh, yes, as long as you're comfortable," Lucius said.

"Well, actually this might be a little more—" Blackbeard shifted around, finding a better position, giving Lucius ample time to take in all that lean muscle moving about. Listen, there was no way Lucius would ever *try* anything with Blackbeard, he wasn't *crazy*, but he could look. Indeed, he could look. Pete was going to be insanely jealous. Maybe even start up a story to compensate. *'You know, I saw Blackbeard's dick once, too.'*

Stede had busied himself picking up Blackbeard's jacket and folding it, although he was doing a very poor job, partly because the modifications to that jacket left it impossible to fold, and partly because he was looking at Blackbeard, not at the task at hand.

"Is this good?" Blackbeard asked, once he settled.

He was leaning back on his hands, his legs bent at the knee, one braced up on the bedframe and the other swinging free. It left the whole of his body

(and Lucius did mean the *whole* of it) sprawled out on display. Honestly, Lucius couldn't have asked for a better pose, unless he wanted to lie down on his side and prop his head up with his hand.

"Perfect," Lucius said.

Lucius appreciated the human form in all its intricacies and variations, specifically the *male* human form, as it commonly came. Even still, he could tell that Blackbeard was an *exemplary* specimen. Of course, he'd known this already. It wasn't like he spent any time watching Stede and Blackbeard practice fencing for no good reason, no, that was because Blackbeard wore his shirts too short for polite company.

Granted, the only 'polite company' around here was Stede. Which meant their only polite company was quietly trying to back away and escape.

"Where do you think you're going?" Blackbeard demanded, his voice sharp enough to make Lucius jump, and Lucius wasn't even the one trying to do a runner.

"Hm? Oh, nowhere," Stede said.

"Good. Quit going back on your word. Distract me from how fuckin' boring this is."

Ordinarily, Lucius would have been offended, because his wit and entertaining company ought to be enough to keep his subject occupied for the length of a portrait sitting, but Blackbeard was one of those people who always made you feel like you weren't interesting enough to keep his attention. The only thing he focused on for more than ten seconds at a time was Stede, and every word that came out of Stede's mouth.

Honestly, if they'd just work all that sexual tension out and finally sleep together, things might be much calmer aboard the Revenge.

Or, the crew would be subject to listening to them moan at hours of the night. Alright, then. Keep your sexual tension.

"Right," Stede said. "Right."

"You might want to sit down, Captain." Lucius laid a sheet of paper across the cover of the journal, using it as sort of a makeshift lap easel.

"I'll just go sit on the couch, then," Stede said.

Blackbeard snorted. "All the way over there? How am I supposed to hear you? Do you know how many cannons have gone off right by my head? Just sit over here, there's room." He patted the blanket he was sitting on. "Maybe the boy can sketch us both."

Lucius would really prefer if Blackbeard would learn his name. If only because it was fucking rude.

"I'll pull up a chair," Stede conceded.

Pity. Lucius bet that if Stede sat right next to Blackbeard right now, his face would turn *purple*.

Stede spent so long dragging a chair over that Lucius already had the basic proportions of Blackbeard's frame sketched out by the time Stede sat down, and even then, he left a period of awkward silence hanging there before he actually started up the chat he'd promised.

"You know, that's quite a lot of tattoos you have," Stede said. World's most awkward conversation starter, but Lucius didn't care, Lucius was busy blocking out the shapes of Blackbeard's chest (nice, by the way). "I didn't realize they were quite so... everywhere."

"You've seen me undress before," Blackbeard said. Lucius was glad his face was turned toward the paper because his eyes went *wide*. "Trading clothes, and whatnot."

"Yes, but I do attempt to be a gentleman about it. In performing those sorts of duties, one is more focused on the clothes than the man beneath them."

Lucius was sure he was reading too far into things, but he could swear he saw Blackbeard's face fall just a little bit when he heard those words. *It's*



*alright, he wanted to say, he's plenty focused on the man beneath the clothes now.*

"Yeah, well, you earn a lot of them at sea. And a lot of scars."

That bit was somewhat of an understatement. There was a cluster of scars just above Blackbeard's left hip, which looked like somewhere around a dozen stab wounds. How was this man still alive? Honestly.

"Fascinating," Stede said. "Lucius, do you have any tattoos?"

"I do not, Captain."

"Don't bother him, he's working," Blackbeard said, which was the first helpful thing he'd contributed. Well, except the immediate offer to strip nude. That was pretty helpful.

"Which one's your favorite?" Stede asked.

"Mm... the big one." Assumedly, he meant the scaled pattern winding down his right arm.

"I like the mermaid," Stede said. "Does she have a name?"

"Anne."

"Well, that's just the name of your ship, isn't it?" Stede said. Lucius spared a glance in his direction—Stede was relaxing, bit by bit. "Not very creative, if you ask me."

"What would you have named her?"

"Amphitrite, maybe? Queen of the seas?"

"Who the fuck?"

"You know. Queen of the seas!"

"I don't know her." Blackbeard kicked his foot, like he was trying to hit Stede in the shins. Stede had placed his chair out of reach, though. "Sorry," Blackbeard said after, settling himself into the closest approximation he could manage of the position he'd been in.

"Keep still," Lucius said. He could have said, '*oh, it's no bother*' but this was probably the only chance he'd have to scold Blackbeard.

"Can't believe you've met a queen of the seas. Of course you have," Blackbeard said.

"She's mythological, I've not met her," Stede replied.

"Then *I* should meet her. I'm mythological."

"And what? Would the world see the *Daemon Pyrate Blackbeard* wedded to the queen of the ocean?" Stede suggested.

"Pfft. No. Can you imagine? Me? A married man? Never." Blackbeard rolled his eyes and shook his head. He was grinning. Lucius happened to be working on the details of his face at that particular moment. He borrowed that grin for his piece. "Matelouge, maybe. Not marriage."

"What?" asked Stede, because he'd not learnt anything about pirates. God. Even Lucius knew what that was. Lucius, personally, thought he was careening toward it, if things with Black Pete kept up as good as they'd been going.

"It's like a marriage between shipmates," Lucius said.

"That can be done?" Stede gasped, aghast. It was probably offensive to his polite-society upbringing. If Stede hadn't been raised up so goddamn wealthy, he might've realized how massively homosexual he was prior to... well, he'd not realized it yet at all, by Lucius' count.

Blackbeard shrugged. "Sure. All the time. I've performed a few ceremonies, myself."

Lucius was rather focused on the shape of Blackbeard's thighs, but he heard Stede shifting in his seat. "So, is it something that you would do with, say, Izzy?"

"Christ, no," Blackbeard said, his nose wrinkling with disgust. "I don't—not Izzy. He's alright as a first mate. Useful bugger, smart as a whip and deadly as cannon fire, but... you upper class bastards, you arrange marriages for wealth and power, right?"

Lucius assumed Stede nodded.

"Yeah, well, it's not like that here." Blackbeard turned his head, looking toward that god-awful painting on Stede's shelf. Lucius had already finished his face, or he'd have scolded him again. "You do it because you love somebody, you ass," he muttered. "And also maybe because you want to combine your wealth and power, yeah. But mostly love."

Lucius heard a soft gasp from Stede's side of the room. "Oh. Well, that's an interesting custom to learn about."

Blackbeard's head turned again, making Lucius quite glad he'd finished the face before he did the important bits, if the man was going to keep looking around like this. He was watching Stede, Lucius estimated, and his eyes were so terribly soft. God, if they started confessing feelings for one another, Lucius was leaving this sketch half-done. Finish your boyfriend's nude portrait yourself, Captain Bonnet.

"But, say you did retire," Stede said. It was an absolutely *insane* notion, what was *Blackbeard* going to do with retirement, sit on a rocking chair and look out over the sea? "Even then?"

"Well, yeah. I mean, I'm pretty sure priests only go about marrying men to women and women to men." He shrugged again. "Not really interested in women." Then, he tipped his head back and groaned. "How long is this going to take?"

"You can't rush art!" Stede exclaimed, totally glossing over the bit where Blackbeard was exclusively interested in men. Lucius felt a small thrill of

vindication. *See there, mum? The preeminent figure in my field also shares my romantic preferences.* Granted, mum probably wouldn't care, given that his 'field' was piracy.

Blackbeard continued to whine about having to sit still, as if he was an overgrown child. The angle did make it obvious that he had a neck under that beard, though, and also that the only stitch of clothing he had on was a black cravat which Lucius was one hundred percent sure belonged to Stede. Honestly, this would have been a nicer angle to draw him at. Lucius wouldn't have been so concerned about the fact that he didn't think he'd gotten Blackbeard's piercing stare quite right.

To be fair to himself, though, Lucius hadn't seen a lot of piercing stare. It'd been more soft glances in Stede's direction.

"It's fine, it's fine, I'm almost done," Lucius said. "Unless you want me to draw all the tattoos, in which case you're on the hook for another hour or so."

"*Fuck* no," said Blackbeard.

"In that case..." Lucius added a few extra marks of shading on the important bits, and then set down his charcoal with a flourish. "You're free."

"Thank god—now show it to me."

He flipped the paper around and handed it to Blackbeard, who held it with just the edges of his fingertips on the edges of the paper. For a moment, Lucius wasn't sure whether he loved it or hated it, just that he was staring with an intense, hawlike gaze.

Then, he said, "*fuck off.*"

Stede stepped a little closer to peer around the edge of the paper, planting one hand on the mattress *very* close to Blackbeard's naked thigh. Lucius was pretty sure he'd read a dirty novel with a scene that started this way.

"Fuck *off*!" Blackbeard repeated, his voice almost a roar. "I look amazing. Look at this. Did you know he could draw like this? That's talent, boy."

"Yes, our Lucius is immensely talented," Stede said, a small smile crossing his lips. "I'll add your commission for this to your wages, of course."

"Of course?" Lucius wasn't aware he'd been getting paid.

"Do I really look like this? Fuckin' *hell*. This is awesome."

"It is a striking resemblance," Stede said. "Although, I do note you focus rather a lot on the groin."

"Yeah, yeah. I like that. It's hot. I look—can we get this one in all the books instead?" Blackbeard suggested.

Lucius couldn't help a nervous giggle. "Um, I mean, I wouldn't be opposed?"

"Oh, heavens. I think that might be a bit risque for proper literature," Stede said.

Blackbeard snorted. "And nine guns isn't? Whatever. I want to put this in a frame like that one, and have it right on the wall."

"*Really?*" Stede asked.

"Sure."

"In *my cabin*."

"No, on the Queen Anne." Blackbeard set down the drawing with as gentle a touch as Lucius had ever seen him use, placing it carefully on Stede's desk. "Right over my bed."

"Well, uh, if that's all you'll be needing, Captain Bonnet. Captain Blackbeard." Lucius tried to back away slowly, whilst Blackbeard became increasingly mesmerized by his own appearance.

"Can you do Stede next?"

"Edward, no," Stede gasped. "Ignore him, Lucius! We'll see you later!"

He was all but herded out the door.

Holy. Fucking. Christ.

Pete was going to lose his *mind*.

Lucius found Pete in the storage-room-slash-nap-room-slash-fuck-room, dozing while using Wee John's belly as a pillow.

"You are not going to believe what just happened to me," Lucius announced as he entered, dropping straight into Pete's lap and waking the both of them.

"God, Lucius! When you didn't show up, I thought you were in some serious trouble with the captain." Pete sounded genuinely worried, which made Lucius feel bad for like a whole second before he remembered exactly how long he'd spent staring at Blackbeard's naked everything.

Wee John patted Lucius on the head. "Were they asking you your opinion on something petty again?"

"Oh, no. This is so much better." Lucius was practically wiggling with delight. "I was tasked with creating a god-damn *masterpiece*, and in return I have been given enough gossip to sustain me for at *least* three days. Also, money, apparently. No clue how much."

"Are you gonna tell us?" Pete asked, looking just as interested as Lucius had hoped, which made up for the fact that Wee John put his arms over his eyes and went back to sleep.

"Well. Let's just say, in the case of Blackbeard, the answer to 'have you ever been sketched?' is now a *solid* yes."

**Author's Note:**

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